On the Morphology of Movement

Aim. The aim of this talk is to propose new, uniform analysis for morphological reflexes of successive-cyclic movement. This is yielded by a new modelling of movement to intermediate phase edges. The example chosen for the analysis is "wh-agreement" in Chamorro.

Background. In many languages, long movement affects lexical material between extraction site and final position; examples are "agreeing complementisers" in Irish, "tonal downstep deletion" in Kikuyu, and "wh-agreement" in Chamorro (e.g. McCloskey 1979, Clements 1984, Chung 1998). An example from Chamorro (Chung 1998:236) is given in (2): In non-extraction contexts, verbal predicates agree with their highest argument in person and number. When a subject is extracted from a transitive realis predicate, then the "regular" person-number morphology is overwritten by a "special" agent voice marker. The analysis is set in a grammar model which enforces long movement as a successive-cyclic application of local movement steps. In this system, elements that are needed at a later stage of the derivation must be made available in each syntactic cycle (=*phase*) between their original and their final position. One way of implementing this is by assuming that the movement to the edge of the current cycle (=*phase edge*) is triggered by a structure-building feature (=*edge feature*) which is inserted into the head of the current cycle (=*phase head*) from outside the numeration. The morphology model adopted here is lexical-realisational (Halle & Marantz 1993, 1994; Harley & Noyer 1999 etc.).

Claim. The new proposal is that reflexes of long movement are consequences of the featural impoverishment of phase heads which in turn is due to the movement to an intermediate landing site. The basic concept is probe impoverishment, originally proposed in Béjar (2003), which I adopt in a modified version: Movement to intermediate landing sites is triggered by an inserted edge feature. There is, however, no edge feature [●X●] as such. Rather, edge features are features that possess the edge property, that is, the ability of building structure by merge. What is inserted is thus only the edge property. This property is no independent feature – just like a clitic, it needs a "host" that it docks on to, and it can be fused with any feature F of the current head. The newly created unit [●F●] then acts as an edge feature in that it triggers internal merge of an element that is later needed. When the edge property is dealt with, then the entire edge feature, including the "host", is deleted, so that [F] is not available anymore as a syntactic context at vocabulary insertion (=*probe impoverishment*). If edge property insertion happens or not (and thus if a probe is impoverished or not) has an effect on the inflectional markers that are post-syntactically inserted into the probe: Due to the Subset Principle, it is always the most specific matching marker M_1 that is inserted. If morphosyntactic features are deleted before vocabulary insertion, then M_1 may not fit anymore into the relevant context. In this case a less specific matching marker M_2 is inserted. Morphological and syntactic path effects are thus always a retreat to the general case.

(1) *Generalisation:* When a language shows different exponents in movement and non-movement contexts, then the marker appearing in the context of movement is less specific than the marker appearing in non-movement contexts (=retreat to the general case, emergence of the unmarked).

Analysis. Let me briefly exemplify the new analysis by means of the Chamorro data in (2). The analysis is based on the idea that there are two competing agreement systems in this language: an Austronesian-style voice marking system, and a person-number marking system. The predicate registers both kinds of agreement, but in most syntactic contexts only one of them surfaces (though they can co-occur, as in ITR IRR PL). There is no "wh-agreement" in the sense that a verbal head agrees with passing wh-elements or traces. Rather, the marker alternation is due to probe impoverishment: the IP is a syntactic cycle, so that the wh-element must be moved to the edge of I. The edge property is thus inserted, and fused with the valued number feature of I (rule: [num] > [●num●] /__ [cat:V –irr arg-arg]). Once the edge feature is satisfied, it is completely deleted, including the value [num]. The consequence that [num] is not available anymore as a syntactic context at vocabulary insertion. The insertion of the person-number marker /ha-/ ↔ [–1 –2 +sg –irr] is thus blocked, and the less specific marker /-um/ ↔ [+ag] is now the only matching marker. This is a retreat to the general case.

Consequences. In this approach, there are no postsyntactic impoverishment rules; rather, impoverishment happens in the syntax as a last resort operation. The decisive advantage of the new approach is that it offers a uniform analysis of morphological and syntactic reflexes of successive-cyclic movement. The analysis correctly derives the surprising characteristic of long movement in Chamorro that higher verbs do not register the argument status of the passing wh-element, but the respective argument status of the clause from which the wh-element is extracted. A striking property of the new analysis is that it works without restrictions on extraction ("subjects-only"), but yields the same effects: The standard analysis of passivisation with object movement in Austronesian languages (e.g. Keenan & Comrie 1977, 1979, Aldridge 2004, Rackowski & Richards 2005) is that a non-subject can only be extracted if it is promoted to subject. In other words, a construction A (recognisable by the marker M) must be formed before an element α can be extracted. In the new analysis, on the other hand, any element can be extracted. The extraction of α automatically makes the outcome of the derivation look like A, as the feature sets of probes along the movement path are manipulated, so that at vocabulary insertion, M, which would normally be blocked by more specific markers, is the only matching marker now. Furthermore, cross-paradigmatic syncretisms in the verbal morphology of Chamorro and Irish can now be treated as occurrences of one and the same underspecified marker, in accordance with the Syncretism Principle (Alexiadou & Müller 2008).

Examples

(2) a. Ha-fa'gasi si Juan i kareta
    3SG-washed UNM Juan DEF car

    'Juan washed the car'

   b. Hayi f<**um**>a'gasi i kareta?
      who <AG>wash DEF car

      'Who washed the car?'

Abbreviations

1,2,3	first, second, third person
AG	agent
arg-arg	transitive valency feature
cat:V	categorial feature of the verb
DEF	definite
IRR	irrealis
ITR	intransitive
num	number feature
PL	plural
SG	singular
UNM	unmarked

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